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SERMON BY THE REV. JOHN REED, D. D.
SERMON BY THE REV. FREDERICK BEASLEY, D. D.

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# ON PRAYER:

## A Sermon

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1 Thessalonians, v. 17.—"*Pray without ceasing.*"

THE *meaning* of these words will *first* claim our attention, and we will *then* proceed to the consideration of the *nature* and *benefits* of prayer.

The *meaning* of the apostle in these words *cannot* be that Christians should be *constantly* engaged in the duty, for this we all know is *incompatible* with other duties, and *impossible* in our present state. He must therefore be understood to instruct us that it is an *every* day duty, that it is a work which is *never* to be considered *finished*, but to be *renewed* and *repeated* to the end of our continuance in the Church militant. And there is another sense in which we are called upon to "pray alway," "without *ceasing*," referring to a *sanctified* state of soul. Our minds and affections are always to be in a state *tuned* for prayer, that whenever touched, they may be ready to respond in the duty. The soul, so disciplined by penitence, so solemnized and elevated by faith, so in love with GOD, and duty, that whenever any *time*, or *place*, or *event* calls upon her, she is *ready* to *pray*, may, in a very significant sense, be said to pray without *ceasing*. She has a taste for prayer, and when GOD, in his providence, moves her, she is ever prepared to engage in the duty. In both these senses every good Christian understands the apostle, for he feels that prayer is the food of the soul, which nourishes and supports her in the Divine life, and he daily hungers and thirsts for it as he does for bodily nourishment. Prayer is the element in which the good Christian *lives*, and *without* which, practical *piety* can no more exist than the *body* can without food.

This is the meaning of the apostle; "pray without *ceasing*."

We are next to turn our attention to the *nature* of prayer. Prayer is altogether a spiritual work, and consists in a converse and communion of the soul with GOD. When in the exercise of faith we prostrate ourselves before our heavenly Father, with our minds loaded with the sense of the august majesty and adorable beauty and excellence of the Divine character, or of the blessed system of redemption and salvation through the Eternal Son, and with a sense that we are in his immediate presence, and that we speak to GOD, and exclaim, "Our Father who art in heaven,"—then we pray. When under a deep sense that we are in a ruined world, that we are depraved by nature, and are sinners by practice, and can be saved only by mercy, and forgiveness, and sanctification, and as the prodigal hungering and thirsting for righteousness, we approach our Father, exclaiming "we have sinned against heaven and in thy sight, and are no more worthy to be called thy children;" "we have done those things which we ought not to have done, we have left undone those things we ought to have done," and "O GOD, the FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST, have mercy upon us miserable sinners,"—then we pray. When under a sense of our many weaknesses and imperfections, of our entire dependance upon GOD for every gift and blessing, temporal and spiritual, we speak to GOD of our wants and necessities, of our poverty and woe, and beg him to supply us, then we pray.

When we see impending evils around us, when we behold the insignia of death before us, when chastised by the wise and holy providence of GOD, and our minds loaded with the desire of being freed from the consequences of sin, both in this and the coming world, we kneel before the Mighty Father, not with terror of his majesty, but as children, with full confidence in his love, and wisdom, and goodness, and power, and beg him to "deliver us from evil,"—then we pray.

From such illustrations, brethren, you perceive the *nature* of prayer; and you perceive it to consist in having the mind, the *affections* and *passions* called into exercise in a converse with GOD. It is hence the most solemn and sublime service in which man can be engaged, and is second in interest, solemnity, and

sublimity, only to that which saints made perfect offer, in the visible presence of GOD in glory.

This being the *nature* of prayer, you must perceive that it is of *universal* obligation. The whole Christian *world* are called to the duty, and are *urged* to an unceasing performance of it. None are to consider themselves excused. For godliness cannot *exist* without it. Every soul who hopes for *blessedness* with GOD *must* converse and commune with him in prayer, for it is a *natural* and *necessary* fruit of the Divine life. *Every* one is to do his *own* praying and not to depend on *others* to do the work for him. And all are to be admonished that each for *himself* must bear upon his own soul his penitential *confessions*, his ascriptions of *praise* and *adorations*, and his petitions for *mercy*, *forgiveness* and *favors* to his GOD. He is not to be content to hear *others* pray and be a *spectator* of worship. *Here* is an error which it is to be feared, is too common in the Christian world. People are apt to think, that because they have *heard* prayer, and perhaps *felt* devout, that they have been praying when they have *not* made the case their *own*, when they have not adopted the sentiment in their own heart, nor carried it by faith and love to their GOD. We should be admonished that *hearing* of prayer is not praying any more than hearing a sermon is preaching; it is *only* being a *spectator* to a most *solemn* exhibition before GOD; and as we are not to be mere spectators, in *heaven*, of the pure and exalted duties *there*, so let us not be *such* while privileged with a standing in the Church militant.

The sublimity and solemnity of this duty, brethren, you perceive, excludes every thing like *indifference*, inattention, or irreverence in the performance of it. Nothing can be more *painful* to the pious mind than the least appearance of levity in the worship of GOD. And you readily perceive that a sense of the holy presence of GOD, a conviction that the eye of omniscience is open within the soul, and that the pen of holy justice is recording in heaven the exercises of that soul, will discipline every faculty of the spirit, will call in every wandering thought, will suppress every spirit of pride, will inspire a spirit of profound humility, and hence will drive away every thing like indifference and levity. When

we pray, therefore, brethren, let us remember that we are in the immediate presence of THE ALMIGHTY, and we shall not fail to offer appropriate supplications to his adorable Majesty.

I am now to advert to the *benefits* of prayer. Said one of old, "What profit will it be if we pray unto him?" and some, more philosophical than pious, of latter days, have asked the same question, saying, "GOD knows our hearts and all our wants, and what profit can it be to pray to him?" I answer this question—much profit every way—much profit, because GOD, in infinite wisdom and goodness, has enjoined the duty and annexed promises to the faithful performance of it—because the practice of it, accompanied by the grace of GOD, improves the Christian graces, and is accompanied with the purest joys which are heired in this vale of tears.

We dwelt not upon the first of these positions, because it is too evident from Scripture, to need proof or illustration. Prayer is an ordinance of GOD. An ordinance which he has expressly enjoined on every disciple. It will not be questioned that he accompanies, with his blessing, the right performance of his ordinances; especially when he positively affirms "seek and ye shall find;" and surely it will not be doubted among Christians that the benefit is great to the heirs of heaven's promises.

In the second place, our holy Father has the right to call upon his creatures to honor him with their acknowledgments, their adorations and humility, and it is agreeable to his merciful and benevolent character that he *should* do so, inasmuch as thereby he benefits the creatures, by calling them to the duty. *And here we find the practical uses of prayer. It is an ordinance of heaven to improve the Christian, and fit him, under the power of Divine grace*, for *glory when he dies.*

*Observe, Christians, its practical influence. Your repentance and humility are perfected by it.* For how can you statedly meet in the temple of your GOD, how daily bow before your Father, confessing your depravity, errors, follies, and sins, exclaiming there is no health in you, and crying for mercy, forgiveness and acceptance, without having every lofty thought umbled, without renewedly renouncing sin which has caused

you to mourn before GOD, without renewed resolutions of leading a new life, or without having a more controlling impression resting on your minds, of the enormity of the guilt of rebelling against GOD? If any thing will effectually prostrate the soul in humility, and fit her for exaltation, it is prayer. For it makes us to know and feel what we are, whither bound, to whom accountable, and creates a solicitude to know what our final destiny may be.

This duty has no less influence upon the grace of faith, than it has upon that of repentance. For how is the soul brought to trust, with unlimited confidence, in the promises, to rest with quiet hope in the merits of the Lord of life, but by the aid of the HOLY SPIRIT; daily and ceaselessly conversing with her heavenly Father, telling her depravity, her guilt and her sorrows, begging his aid and acceptance, begging, and daily receiving, the bread of life and the water of life at his hand, carrying to him the burthen of all her woes, and the woes of friends and enemies: thanking and adoring him for his blessings of daily life and comfort; for the constant succors of Divine grace; for the blessed system of redemption and salvation by which a fallen world is called from ruin; and above all, for the gift of the Eternal Son as a sacrifice for the sins of the human kind? It is impossible for the soul to daily, by faith, visit Mount Calvary, beholding the Eternal Son bleeding, quivering, and dying for her, and then following him to the tomb, and from thence to the throne on high, and contemplating him *there*, providing seats for the blessed, and interceding for the redeemed, without having her faith strengthened and her hope enlivened, in those blessed promises which he hath revealed to the world in his Gospel. Prayer is looking upon GOD, it is throwing ourselves upon his mercy—it is depending upon his goodness and love, it is relying upon an infinite parent, and receiving blessings at his hands, and must therefore increase our faith and trust in him.

Another benefit of prayer, is, that it increases our love and attachment to the infinite parent of the universe. For who can daily contemplate the transcendantly lovely character of GOD, and beg and receive of him, favors and blessings from day to day,

without loving him more and more? "We love him because he first loved us," saith the apostle—and surely that duty which daily brings that love into view, and presents it in active exercise, cannot fail to fasten the affections and passions in more and more active exercise upon the object in view—and if it lead us to venerate and love GOD, it will incline us to more constant and zealous observance of his laws. Lingering by faith and love around the throne of our LORD, considering ourselves of his family, we shall the more cheerfully be governed by the laws of his household, and while we hold sacred the *Lawgiver*, we shall receive the *law* as the rule and guide of our lives. If, then, a lively exercise of the graces of the Gospel, penitence, faith and love, be profitable —if they afford comfort in *life*, and hope in *death*, we may be assured that prayer is a duty, which, faithfully discharged will not be without its fruits.

But the benefits of this duty end not here. It saves the soul from *terror*. The mind can have recourse to nothing which is so *sure* a remedy, in trembling and distraction, as to turn to that blessed LORD, who came to bring peace on earth, and to do good to man. In the most frightful condition, if we can turn to him who saith, "Come unto me all ye who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest," remembering that we are in his hands, that he knows our case, and is ready and willing to bring us out of it in the wisest and best way, our souls cannot fail to return to their rest with the exclamation "Father, thy will be done." And *what* cordial so reviving to the soul, confined to the chambers of sickness and woe—when pains distract, and lassitude bears down, when friends are broken with watchings and solicitude, and sadness and sorrow brood on every countenance, how soothing and comforting to be carried to the throne of Divine mercy and love, and have our case laid before the great physician of soul and body! We are led to say, "the providence is GOD'S work"—we humbly acquiesce in *his* councils—every murmur is suppressed, when secondary causes are overlooked, and we see the hand of our Father in his wise and holy dealing. Your preacher has long been conversant with scenes of sickness and woe, and he has always found it best and wisest to carry the afflicted to the

throne of mercy by prayers, whether as an expedient to calm the mind by looking to the promises of heaven, or to render temporal remedies effectual to the diseased body. The agonizing father and mother bowing over the suffering child, is calmed into peace and humble resignation by kneeling around the suffering patient, and, in faith, committing that patient to a present GOD, who has lent them the precious charge, and who now afflicts them in love, and who, if it be best for them, will hear their supplications and spare. And how great a good to the *widow*—the widow bereaved of the companion of her days, seemingly stripped of every earthly dependence and hope, the privilege of going to the only hearer and answerer of prayer, to Him who declares himself the widow's GOD, and begging him to take her into his holy care and keeping, to sustain her in the cares and labors of life, to enrich her by his grace, and so carry her "through things temporal, that she lose not the things eternal?" Ask her, and she will tell you that when the counsel, the sympathies, and consolations of friends failed in prayer she has received "beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness," —she will tell you that it has been a mean of collecting her distracted thoughts, of bringing her near to her GOD, of realizing that she is in the hands of a father who will never leave nor forsake her.

And what duty so appropriate for, and in behalf of, orphan children, as begging the care and blessing of Him who has promised to be a father to the fatherless? Parents, picture to yourselves your children surrounding your dying pillow, and what office would you ask for them, and what duty would you recommend to them? Your hearts respond—the prayers of Christians, and daily devotions to that GOD who is able and willing to comfort, and succour, and guide, and save them.

But there is a wider field in which we may look for the privileges and blessings of the great duty under consideration. There are times when the whole community, when towns and states and the whole world, are under the chastising hand of GOD. Such, we know and feel is the case now. The destroying angel is abroad on the face of the earth. Why it is so, we are not privi-

leged to know. Why the holy sovereign of the universe visits the present generation more severely than others, is a mystery in his wise and holy counsels. Two reasons, however, it is always safe to render, because they are revealed to us—sin has entered this world, and GOD permits pestilence and death to follow it. And in the second place, he permits this, to call the sons and daughters of men, and especially those of the Christian world, nearer to him in the exercises of those graces, and the practice of those duties which he has appointed, and demands, in the blessed system of his salvation. Hence we are called upon, brethren, under the present chastisement, and are called by the eloquence of Heaven's providence, to especially humble ourselves before GOD, on account of our own sins and the sins of the world. We are to cry to our Father that our "burthen is intolerable," and "have mercy upon us"—and we are privileged to pray to him that the plague may be stayed, and that he will again lift upon us the light of his countenance. Thus did his servants of old, and they were blessed.

In thus appealing to GOD, brethren, we appeal *not* to an *enemy*, but to that Father who has given us being, and crowned us with mercy and loving kindness—that Father who loves us, and knows what is best for us—that Father who will not lay upon us more than we can bear—that Father who has life and bliss for evermore to bestow upon us, and who, if we go to him in the simplicity of children, will either preserve us and bless us here—or take us to a better world than this, where he will enrich us with every good, where our prayers shall be changed into ceaseless praise, and the knowledge of pestilence shall never come.

Be not terrified, then, my friends, in the present awful crisis—but using all reasonable and prudent precautions to preserve your lives, use diligently and devoutly, the means of Divine grace, and trust humbly, and confidently, and cheerfully, to the goodness of GOD. Daily devotions will constantly keep before you the protecting hand of your Father, and while you commit to his holy care and keeping yourselves, your souls, and bodies, and every thing near and dear to you, you will feel yourselves to be within the ark and covenant of Him who can guide you safely over the sea of life, amidst all its storms and tempests; and so feeling you

will go forth to your daily avocations, with calm and composed minds, with a spirit better prepared for the duties of your stations, and better prepared to meet the changing scenes of time, and the better to meet that great change to which we are all hastening. As it is wrong to trifle with the solemn providences of GOD, and shows a hardened insensibility, so it is wrong to despond when the Holy Father shows himself in the majesty of his justice. When the tempests roar, we are to be *awed* under a sense that GOD reigns, but are not to murmur or repine: although he speaks with such majesty, it is *best*, because infinite wisdom and love controls every thing in heaven, and through the universe. So when pestilence walketh around us at the noon day, our Father is carrying on his great work of wisdom and love, and we should humbly and patiently wait the issue of his providence, assured that we shall one day see his counsels revealed, and behold them resplendent with justice, wisdom and holiness.

Let me intreat you then, my beloved friends, to daily approach your GOD and Father in penitence, faith, and love,—consider prayer a privilege, as well as duty—perform it, stimulated by love and not by fear. Parents, go to your common Father, and carry with you your children, your dependants, and every thing near and dear to you—and beloved youth, go to that Father who will hear and bless you when earthly parents, and every thing below, shall fail. Finally, my beloved friends, let us all go from kneeling before our GOD and Savior, to our daily avocations, and we shall not fail to go with content and cheerfulness—and so going through life, we shall not fail to go from life temporal to life eternal—with joy unspeakable, and full of glory.

## AN EXHORTATION TO PRAYER.

1 What various hind'rances we meet,
In coming to a mercy-seat!
Yet who that knows the worth of prayer,
But wishes to be often there!

2 Prayer makes the darken'd cloud withdraw,
Prayer climbs the ladder Jacob saw,
Gives exercise to faith and love,
Brings every blessing from above.

3 Restraining prayer, we cease to fight;
Prayer makes the Christian's armor bright;
And Satan trembles when he sees
The weakest saint upon his knees.

4 While Moses stood with arms spread wide,
Success was found on Israel's side;
But when through weariness they fail'd,
That moment Amalek prevail'd.

5 Have you no words, ah! think again,
Words flow apace when you complain,
And fill your fellow-creature's ear
With the sad tale of all your care.

6 Were half the breath thus vainly spent,
To heaven in supplication sent,
Your cheerful songs would oft'ner be,
'Hear what the Lord has done for me!'

# ON INDUSTRY:

## A Sermon

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Proverbs x. 4.—"*But the hand of the diligent maketh rich.*"

My Brethren;—At the same time that our religion forbids a too anxious pursuit of the good things of this world, and requires our supreme solicitude to be directed to the accumulation of our heavenly treasures, yet, inasmuch as the Creator, in his wisdom, has placed us upon this theatre of action, and alloted us the performance of our several parts, to promote the benefit of the whole community of mankind, He has not neglected to admonish us of our obligations to diligence and fidelity in duty. The active employment of our time and talents in the laudable avocations of life, is so far from being incompatible with an attention to the interests of futurity, that it is comprised in them as a natural and indispensable ingredient. For the faithful cultivation of his talents, and his assiduity in doing good, the Christian anticipates his reward, as well as for his performance of pious offices. If, with a reference to the interests of futurity, Christianity exhorts us to set our affections on things above, with a view to our peace and prosperity in this world, in an equally authoritative voice, she requires us "not to be slothful in business, but whatsoever our hands find to do, to execute it with all our might." The Christian is stationed in this world, like the Jews, who were commissioned to rebuild their city, after its destruction by Nebuchadnezzar:—being assaulted by their enemies, who wished to defeat their attempt, they were compelled to carry on their labor armed and prepared for resistance—similar to their condition, is that of the pious man. While toiling in the discharge of duty, he keeps himself clad in the whole armor of faith, that he may at once subdue all his enemies, and construct for himself in the

City of the living God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

I. My brethren: Industry is a duty arising out of the law of our nature.

II. It is our best preservative from vicious habits.

III. It is an indispensable means to every valuable attainment.

IV. It is an essential ingredient in the true enjoyment of life.

You have before you the considerations by which we would excite you to the cultivation of this virtue.

I. In the first place, we have said, that industry is a duty arising out of the constitution of our nature.

Never has the Creator more clearly indicated his intention, in any contrivance of his works, than in that structure both of our minds and bodies, by which he stimulates us to habits of activity. All our faculties of body and mind, and more especially the latter, are communicated to us, in the rudest and most feeble condition, but susceptible of indefinite improvement and vigor; like veins of the most precious metals in the mine, they display but a small proportion of their beauty and intrinsic value, before they are wrought and polished by the hand of the artist. No man has ever yet carried any one of his powers to the utmost perfection of which it is capable: how much more, then, have we failed in attaining the highest practicable perfection of them all? Is not this adjustment, an intelligible declaration to us by our Supreme Contriver, that he requires from us the assiduous improvement of our powers? If we are to ascribe any distinct significance to the parable of our Savior, which relates to the distribution of various talents among mankind, the Deity does not regard it as a matter of mere negative virtue, or indifferent obligation, whether we neglect or comply with this intimation of his will. He reprehends with sharp severity, and denounces dreadful punishment against him, who was delinquent in the improvement of his talent —"Take, therefore, the talent from him," says our Lord, "and give it unto him that hath ten talents. For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance. But from

him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath" —"And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness." It is not, therefore, left simply as an affair of indifference, to our good will and pleasure, to determine whether we will fulfil or violate this great law of our moral nature. The severest penalty is annexed to its infringement, in the law of God, as well as the order of Providence. But the Creator has not confined the expression of his will to us, upon this subject, to the structure of our nature and the cultivable condition in which we find our powers —He has spread the whole earth before us as a field of exertion, and incited us to activity by presenting every object which can supply our wants, gratify our desires, or reward our diligence. The earth is filled with his riches, and his clouds drop fatness upon the soil, to animate us in the pursuit of those blessings which contribute to our ease, comfort, and rational enjoyment. By the sweat of our brow we are ordained to reap the fruits of the ground, and by the same, or similar methods, we can draw from the bowels of the earth mines of gold, silver, and all the inestimable metals. Having been cast naked, exposed, and helpless into the world, we are constrained to exert our utmost skill and ingenuity to guard ourselves against the inclemencies of the weather, and the rigors of the seasons; to provide for our immediate necessities, and for our future comfort and accommodation. Thus the scene into which we are introduced, becomes a universal school, in which we are awakened to exertion by the apprehensions of want and suffering, and inured to toil by the prospect of reward. Could our Supreme Ruler, without a miraculous voice from heaven, more loudly declare to us his determination to awake us to habits of activity and useful enterprise? Nor is this all—essentially active himself, He has impressed the same law upon the whole material and immaterial frame of things—The sublime orbs that compose the planetary system, move incessantly through their path-way in the sky, distributing to us the grateful vicissitudes of day and night, summer and winter, seed-time and harvest. The elements are undergoing perpetual changes, the clouds dispensing their showers upon the earth, the ocean pouring its tides into the rivers, and the rivers pouring their streams into

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the deep. All nature teems with life and motion, and the animate creation seems to derive from activity its pastime and delight. And shall man alone be found in disgraceful indolence and sloth? While all nature furnishes him examples of an incessant and beneficial activity, shall he only consume his precious hours in inaction, bury the talents entrusted to him by the Great Proprietor of all things, and fail to fulfil those important purposes for which he was sent into the world! Go to the ant, thou sluggard! who in the genial warmth of summer collects her provision for the inclement season of winter—to the bee, which is incessantly on the wing to collect its food, or to the beaver that, with consummate art, and unwearied diligence, constructs its place of residence in the waters, and learn the lessons of a useful and provident industry.

But if industry be a duty, arising out of an urgent law, both of our physical and moral nature; in the next place, my brethren,

II. It is our best preservative from vicious habits.

He who is constantly occupied, in the improvement of his mind, the right conduct of his affairs, or the management of his estate, finds his hours pass happily away without a resort to those stimulating, but dangerous pleasures, to which the idle have recourse, in order to fill up the vacuities of life. Besides that sound state of the heart and mind, which constant engagement has a tendency to preserve, he whose time is devoted to the toils of some useful profession, is in a great degree removed out of the influence of the temptations to vice, his passions are cooled by the ventillation of active pursuits, and his desires elevated to the noblest objects. On the contrary, there is no condition of existence more perilous to the moral characters of men, as well as more fatal to their peace and happiness, than a state of total inaction. The heart and mind, being no longer a wholesome fountain, preserving the purity of its waters by the agitations of virtuous affections and desires, is converted into a stagnant pool, in which is engendered a noxious brood of evil inclinations and criminal passions. The mind of man is naturally active, restless and impatient of that languor and dejection of spirits, which are the results of a total

vacuity of some enlivening occupation; hence, if its powers be not exerted in the pursuit of virtuous and laudable objects of desire, it will soon seek its employment and gratification in pernicious amusements, or licentious pleasures. These observations apply, with peculiar aptitude and force, to the young and inexperienced. Nothing but the prosecution of elegant studies, or devotion to manly and useful pursuits, will save them from those ruinous excesses, into which they are driven by the fervor and impetuosity of early passions and desires. It is said by philosophers, that a state of total calm in the atmosphere and ocean, soon gives rise to the pestilential effluvia, and then to those tremendous hurricanes, which, in tropical regions, cut off so many of the inhabitants, and spread desolation and ruin through their most luxuriant plantations. It would seem as if the laws of the spiritual world were similar to those of the natural. The mind in a state of sloth, first becomes corrupt and putrescent, and shoots forth all the rankest weeds of vice, and then, is subjected to the tempestuous fury of its passions, of shame, chagrin, mortification, and remorse. Parents, whatever may be the condition or future expectations of your children, accustom them, from the earliest period, either to an assiduous culture of their understandings, or to the toils of some useful profession. Young men! if you are without fortunes, and are in quest of subsistence and competence for yourselves, early contract habits of application and industry, and with very moderate capacities, you will soon find yourselves in possession of comfort and independence. If heaven has already blessed you with the advantages of wealth, let the leisure you enjoy be devoted either to those elegant pursuits which will elevate your character, adorn your family and country, and even communicate a zest to your recreations and amusements, or to the performance of beneficial offices to your fellow-men. How much more happily, as well as rationally, will your lives be spent amidst a judicious intermixture of study and pleasure, of activity and rational amusement, than in the slumber and ennui of total inaction, or the giddy whirl of a frivolous, if not criminal dissipation?

My brethren, no truth is more completely established by experience and observation than this, that if indolence and sloth find

us in a state of innocence and uprightness, they will not long permit us to remain so. Who but the idle are they, who become addicted to the most destructive vices, and are the most frequent disturbers of the peace, order, and happiness of society? Who but the idle, are the drunkards, the blasphemers, the backbiters, the calumniators, the tale-bearers, the sowers of family discord, the gamblers, debauchees, corrupters of youth, the brawlers in political contests, and the most zealous fomenters of disaffection to government, and tumult, sedition, confusion and rebellion in the state? The Roman historian enumerates the idle vagabonds among those desperate men, who, under the conduct of Cataline, preyed upon the peace of their country, and threatened the dissolution of the body politic. And it is not unworthy of observation, at this time, as an illustration of our subject, that Cicero, the illustrious Consul, who, by his vigilance and exertions, relieved the Roman commonwealth from this formidable conspiracy, was as distinguished by his unwearied diligence and application to business and study, as that celebrated conspirator was for his habits of idleness, dissipation, extravagance and excess. There is a most intimate alliance between industry and many of the most exalted virtues that improve and adorn our race. It was in the bosom of a luxurious and effeminate court were engendered the incest of Ammon, the fatal ambition of Adonijah, the lawless passions of David, and the rank rebellion and foul licentiousness of Absalom, which led to his destruction. And from what, but the teeming soil of indolence and sloth, spring all those venomous vices, who like serpents generated in the bosom of a state, corrupt and poison it, and finally bring on its dissolution? And it was as a punishment upon the rich voluptuary in the Gospel, who exclaimed, "soul, thou hast goods laid in store for many years, take thine ease, eat, drink and be merry," that the awful decree came out against him from Heaven, "thou fool! this night shall thy soul be required of thee." In the rich, habits of sloth are apt to be connected with the most disgraceful luxury and effeminacy, and in the poor, with the most debasing vices. Nothing serves more successfully to preserve the moral purity of life, than that constant agitation of the heart and affections, which is occasioned by the pursuits of indus-

try. Hence, we find that unrivalled philosopher, and most exemplary Christian, Mr. Locke, in his treatise upon education, recommending to young persons, of all classes and conditions in society, to acquire a knowledge of some mechanical trade, to give vigor to their bodies, and useful occupation to their moments of intellectual leisure. And we find that St. Paul, also, eminent as he was, as a chosen ambassador of Heaven, and supremely devoted, as he discovered himself to be, to the duties of the ministry, did not regard it as a diminution of his dignity, or a waste of his precious time, to obtain a portion of his subsistence by laboring as tent-maker, a trade which the wise custom of his contemporaries had induced him to acquire in early life. This is a practice which would be congenial to the spirit of our republic, and form an admirable resource for us, in case of those losses and disasters, which so often involve the most excellent families in difficulty and distress.

III. In the next place, my brethren, industry is an indispensable means to every valuable attainment. Could the young be made fully sensible of the importance and efficiency of this instrument of wealth, honor, reputation and greatness, the discovery would be of inestimable value. It is the grand secret, by which the illustrious of our race have achieved those wonders, which fill our minds with admiration and astonishment. There is, undoubtedly, considerable disparity in the original endowments of mankind. The faculties of some men's minds are like golden ore, some like silver and brass, while others are rather to be compared to lead and iron—but whatever may be the disparities subsisting between them in their original conformation; much greater distinctions arise out of their assiduous cultivation. What close application of mind, incessant toil, and persevering prosecution of their study or business, have signalized those men, whose names are consecrated in the memory of mankind, and whose achievements have embellished and immortalized the records of history? Newton ascribed all the discoveries he had made, and the stupendous works he had completed, not to any superiority in his native genius, but to his habits of incessant and long-continued application of mind. And Cicero himself reveals to us the mystery, by which he accomplished such wonders, when he informs us that he

snatched the hours, which others consumed in attendance upon gladiatorial combats, theatrical amusements, and other modes of recreation, and devoted them to the pursuits of philosophy and a preparation for serious affairs. Could all the authors of those great productions which we are accustomed to admire, speak to us upon this topic, they would utter a similar language. The ill-fated Chatterton, whose early excellence gave the promise of uncommon maturity, declared, that men by abstinence and perseverance could do any thing. The sentiment is just and important. There is nothing valuable in life which we may not attain, with very moderate capacity, by diligence and assiduity. There are no maxims of science so profound that industry will not enable us to fathom them, no efforts of art so difficult that they cannot be achieved by it, and no enterprise too arduous to be accomplished by a persevering activity. This is the miraculous power, still exercised upon earth, which levels all impediments, surmounts obstacles and removes mountains—be active, enterprising and indefatigable from early life, and rest assured, that a golden competence shall crown your mature years, and plenty and independence shall gladden for you the vale of declining life.

Finally, my brethren, industry is an essential ingredient in the true enjoyment of life. It forms the most palatable condiment to all our pleasures. It communicates a stronger appetite for our food and drink, a more perfect digestion, more brisk and cheerful spirits, greater elasticity of mind, and a more pungent self-enjoyment. It imparts health and strength to the body and mind, moderates the passions, brightens the faculties of thinking, prepares us to sustain disasters with fortitude and equanimity, attracts to us the esteem and confidence of others, gives a lively relish to our moments of leisure, and by promoting a free circulation of the fluids through the body, and a cheerful excitement of the feelings, disposes us to acts of kindness, hospitality, friendship and charity to others. A large proportion of that want, misery and mendicity which prevail in the world, is to be traced to idleness, and those vices which are its natural progeny. The hand of the diligent, if it cannot always make us rich, will at least, except in cases of inevitable misfortune, secure us from the miseries of poverty.

To conclude, my brethren : let us never cease to keep in mind, that while it is so laudable and our bounden duty, to exert ourselves in the performance of the tasks assigned us by our Heavenly Father, upon this transitory stage of action, there is a more exalted part to be executed by us, in a more permanent and desirable condition of existence. It would be of small avail to us, in the issue, if by our diligence and assiduity, we could obtain the whole of this world, should we find ourselves refused a part in that better world, or a place among the blessed children of the resurrection. While we labor so zealously, and so dutifully, too, for the meat and raiment which to-day are, and to-morrow perish forever, we must not forget to seek those robes of immortal honor which the saints shall wear forever, and to thirst for those streams of happiness, that water the paradise above. There is no slight affinity between habits of diligence, in our temporal affairs, and vigilance and activity in our spiritual toils. The unwise virgins slumbered and slept, while the wise vigilantly trimmed their lamps, provided their supply of oil, and were ready to attend the bridegroom. Indolence and sloth may rob us, not only of our temporal, but our eternal treasures. Habits of activity in the concerns of this world, are easily transferred to the concerns of the next. Let us, then, be upon the alert in our Christian vocation, redeeming the time, knowing that the days are evil. Our days, like the sand-glass, are rapidly running out, and the hour must soon arrive in which no man can work. Ceasing to do evil, let us toil incessantly in doing good. Oh ! how sweet will be the rest of Heaven, after we have been wearied and exhausted with the labor and heat of the day of grace ! May this heavenly rest be ours, and that at no distant date ! We would not live alway if we could. This world is not a scene, fitted for the protracted residence of an immortal spirit. Our soul is athirst for the living God, and ardently desires to depart, and be present with its Redeemer, and not with its Redeemer only, but also with prophets, apostles, martyrs, just men made perfect, and all the holy company of Heaven. Oh ! who for such a blessed society as this, would not willingly resign this fitful dream of human existence, and exchange this land of dreary exile from his home ?

## INSENSIBLE FLIGHT OF TIME.

This shadow on the dial's face,
That steals from day to day,
With slow, unseen, unceasing pace,
Moments, and months, and years away;
This shadow, which, in every clime,
Since light and motion first began,
Hath held its course sublime;
What is it? mortal man!
It is the scythe of time:
—A shadow only to the eye;
Yet, in its calm career,
It levels all beneath the sky;
And still, through each succeeding year,
Right onward, with resistless power,
Its stroke shall darken every hour,
Till nature's race be run,
And time's last shadow shall eclipse the sun.

Nor only o'er the dial's face,
This silent phantom, day by day,
With slow, unseen, unceasing pace,
Steals moments, months, and years away;
From hoary rock, and aged tree,
From proud Palmyra's mouldering walls,
From Tenerifle, towering o'er the sea,
From every blade of grass, it falls;
For still where'er a shadow sweeps,
The scythe of time destroys,
And man at every footstep weeps
O'er evanescent joys;
Life's flow'rets glittering with the dews of morn,
Fair for a moment, then for ever shorn:
—Ah! soon, beneath the inevitable blow,
I too shall lie, in dust and darkness low.

Then time, the conqueror, will suspend
His scythe, a trophy, on my tomb,
Whose moving shadow shall portend
Each frail beholder's doom.
O'er the wide earth's illumined space,
Though time's triumphant flight be shown,—
The truest index on his face,
Points from the churchyard stone.